

We also need to have a serious discussion about sentencing reform and finding ways to restore the lost trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve. The BALTIMORE Act will allow us to move decisively in that direction by ending racial profiling, increasing accountability, collecting critical crime data such as officer-related shootings, and providing real strategies and resources to strengthen police-community relations. These measures will help protect the rights of every American on every side of our justice system.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

OBAMACARE

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, when I have constituents come to Washington, DC, I typically will describe this as being a little bit like Disneyland. It is a lot of fun to visit, with a lot of excitement. A lot of things happening here, but it is not real. It is not real.

What I mean by that is that what is real are the lives that are lived by the average American families all across this country, whether it is Nebraska, Texas or elsewhere and the struggles they have trying to raise their children, trying to get a good education, trying to keep a job—to keep a job that has good wages and one that hopefully grows over time. But in Washington, the focus is typically on winners and losers—winners and losers. If you look at almost any newspaper each week in Washington, they will talk about the winners and the losers. Usually, they are talking about political figures such as the President of the United States.

So I just happened to catch one headline that talked about the President being the biggest winner of the week in Washington, DC.

Why? Well, one is because of the trade promotion authority legislation that we passed that we worked with the President on. That happened to be a subject that I agreed with the President on—the importance of opening new markets to the things that we grow, the livestock we raise, and the manufactured goods we make. Hopefully, we will be able to enter into a good deal on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, opening up 40 percent of the world's economy in Asia to the new markets for the things that we make, grow, and the livestock we raise.

So that happened to be a subject on which I agreed with the President. He had more problems with his own party. We got 13 Senate Democrats to join us in passing this legislation, but we got it done. I think in that instance—maybe you could call the President a winner if you want—you could say that the American people were the winner, and I think that would be accurate too.

But on the loser's side of the ledger, we had a disappointing decision by the U.S. Supreme Court today, where they

ignored the clear language that Congress wrote when the Affordable Care Act was passed in March of 2010. Even worse, while the press may consider that this represents a win for the President, there is no question in my mind that the vast majority of the American people are the losers as a result of this decision. The fact is that ObamaCare has been a disaster for millions of hard-working families, and it was really sold under false pretenses.

The President said: If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor.

Well, that ended up not being true.

If you like your policy, you can keep your policy.

Well, that ended up not being true for roughly 5 million people who lost their insurance coverage that they liked because the law said they couldn't keep it anymore.

Then there was the fact that the President said this: Prices of health coverage for an average family will come down \$2,500.

None of those proved to be true.

So despite the Supreme Court's disappointing decision, I will not stand down in my opposition to this bad law, because I know we can do better. I look forward to working with our colleagues to eventually protect the American people from the harmful effects of ObamaCare and get the American people what they thought they were going to get out of health care reform in the first place—coverage they wanted at a price they could afford, neither one of which is delivered under ObamaCare.

WORKING TOGETHER IN THE SENATE

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, as I indicated initially, this Congress—and particularly the Senate—has had an unusually productive period of time of late. It may be hard for some people to believe, but the most common word I heard used to describe Congress last year, and in recent years, has been “dysfunctional.” But we have actually been functioning very well. We have been able to accomplish quite a bit.

Today the Senate is marked by something that we refer to as regular order. What does that mean? It means that we operate according to the rules, where not only the majority but also the minority get to participate in the process, both at committees and on the floor of the Senate. If anybody has a good idea, they can offer that idea, and they can actually get a vote on it up or down.

I was pleased to read in the Wall Street Journal yesterday that two former Republican majority leaders wrote that they were encouraged to see “the Senate addressing big problems after years of inaction.” I couldn't agree more.

Bringing the amendment process back is one obvious way we have done so under the new majority after years of inaction. Now that may sound like inside baseball or just talking about

procedure, but by allowing Members of both parties—the minority and the majority—to offer their ideas on legislation, we have restored the ability of all Members of the Senate, as elected representatives of the people, to cast our votes on numerous issues that affect all of our constituents and the country.

But restoring such a simple process, one that had been largely absent during the years the minority leader held the reins, represents a real sign of progress.

At the beginning of this year, it was reported that just 3 weeks into the new Senate, we had voted on more amendments than the minority leader had allowed during the last year in its entirety. Let me say that again, because it is pretty shocking. In the first 3 weeks of this year, we had voted on more amendments than the minority leader—when he was majority leader—allowed in the entire previous year.

Well, it would mean nothing if it didn't reflect the core philosophy of the new leadership of this Chamber. In other words, our successes on amendment votes didn't stop after our first month in the new Congress. I am now proud to say that voting is now the norm, instead of the exception to the rule.

What did our constituents send us here to do, if not to vote? During the last 6 months, the Senate has voted on 136 amendments in legislation, compared to just 15 last year. We are working for the American people, and, more importantly, the Congress is now working on their behalf and actually beginning to solve real problems that have lingered for years.

But we have done more than just allow amendments and votes on amendments. During the last few months, we have passed more than 40 bipartisan bills. Now, if anybody has been here for very long, one of the things they learned, perhaps to their chagrin, is that you can't do anything around here on a purely partisan basis. You just don't have the numbers to do it—with some notable exceptions. But we passed more than 40 bipartisan bills, and we have seen 18 of those already signed into law by the President.

This includes important legislation that I am very proud of called the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, which passed this Chamber 99 to 0 and is focused on making sure we help the victims of modern-day slavery recover and rebuild their lives and making sure that these women, typically teenage girls, are treated as victims and not criminals.

We have also passed other important legislation, such as the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act. This law will give Congress the time and space to closely scrutinize any deal that the President negotiates with Iran concerning its pursuit of nuclear weapons. In so doing, we will make sure that the American people, through their elected representatives, can voice their opinions on what could be a bad deal that

could jeopardize our national security and that of our allies, such as the nation of Israel.

Then there is the National Defense Authorization Act, which was passed this last week and which will provide our men and women in uniform the authorities and the resources they need to protect and defend our Nation against rising threats around the world.

And, as I mentioned at the beginning, just yesterday we passed trade promotion authority, which will soon be heading to the President's desk. It provides Texas farmers, ranchers, and small businesses the opportunity to find new markets around the world through pending and future trade agreements.

We also see significant progress in many other bills that the Senate may soon consider, bills that our committee chairs have been tirelessly moving forward. This includes more than 110 bills that have been reported out of committee and legislation such as the PATENT Act, a bill I have been very involved in, which helps startups and small businesses that are too often wasting their time and money fighting costly, frivolous litigation.

It is good to see that the Senate is back working for the American people, and it is my hope that we can, on a bipartisan basis, continue to build on our strong record so far this Congress and to continue to work productively, where we can, to serve those who elected us.

The Senate is starting to build some momentum. With several appropriations bills looming, we need to keep getting things done and to continue providing real solutions to the problems it faces.

Although my friends across the aisle suggested that they will launch a filibuster summer, I would like to stress that would undercut the good progress and the productivity we have demonstrated so far, and it would also frustrate the American people and only harm those whom we are sent here to represent, not the least of which are our troops and veterans.

So let's do away with this irresponsible idea of a filibuster summer, and let's work together to try to do the Nation's business.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I wish to say a couple of things before I speak to the issue that brought me to the floor today.

I have been listening to our leader from Texas talk about so many of the advances we have seen in the Senate this session. I think it is important to acknowledge and note that we are making progress. Often we get labeled in the media for being that "do-nothing Congress," that entity which is just engaged in loggerheads and deadlock. But I think the truth is and the facts on the ground are that we are seeing

substantive legislation passed, just as the Senator from Texas has noted.

I was pleased to lead off the Senate with the first bill on the floor in this Congress—the Keystone XL Pipeline. It was good to be back at work in a body that was entertaining amendments from both sides and offered by my colleagues without any direction or dictation from the majority side—an opportunity for the give-and-take that comes with not only good debate but not knowing whether your amendment is going to pass or fail. That is how the legislative process works.

The occupant of the Chair is a former member of a State body, as am I. We know that is how you build legislation, the good, constructive back-and-forth. We saw that with the Keystone XL debate. We moved that through both bodies. The President chose to veto it. I think it is a mistake on his part. I would like to see us resolve that eventually. But I do think it reflects the way that we as a Chamber can work and the way a constructive majority can work. So I applaud the leadership of the majority in getting us to this point and through some very difficult issues. We are going to have some good things coming up, and I look forward to further engaging in debate on those.

FIRES IN ALASKA

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I want to mention very quickly what is on the front page of my newspapers in the State of Alaska this week and has been for a couple of weeks now. Our fire season started very early and with an intensity that has really attracted concern not only within the State but outside the State. Currently, we have about 545 fires that have begun within the State, both in the interior, where we traditionally see them, but also down in Southcentral, fires that have taken homes and properties.

In the first part of the fire season, there was a great deal of attention on the community of Willow, an area that hosts the homes of many of our famous and our infamous dog mushers, mushers who mush along the Iditarod Trail and other parts. The articles have been about the dislocation of not only the mushers who have lost their homes but also trying to find places for up to 600 sled dogs for temporary relocation.

So there has been a great deal of concern about the fire status in Alaska. As I mentioned, 545 fires have burned, 427,881 acres as of yesterday evening. That is a significant total. It is a very significant total, but it is pretty small in comparison to where we were in 2004 when we saw almost 5 million acres burn. In 2004, 4.7 million acres burned, and in 2005, we had 2.2 million acres.

We are hopeful that the weather is going to change and that we will get on top of this. But when I was home in Fairbanks in the interior on Saturday, on Saturday alone we saw 6,500 lightning strikes at a time and a place where it is very dry in the interior and

has been for some time. So fire danger is very real.

My point this morning is not to give the weather report but to acknowledge publicly the efforts of the men and women who have been engaged so bravely and so heroically in fighting these wildland fires, fighting these fires all over the State in extreme conditions, in difficult conditions where wind can come in at the last minute and change the direction of the fires and not only threaten the property but the safety of our firefighters.

Right now, we have about 3,300 fire personnel in the State of Alaska. About 2,200 of them are fighting fires on the ground. Over 1,000 of these are men and women from Alaska. Many of them are hotshots and are firefighters from the villages who have a great deal of expertise, but we also rely on many who come from the lower 48 to assist us during this time of our wildfires. We thank them and we pray for their safety and for those who have been left homeless, whose property has been damaged, whose lives have been upended by these very difficult fires. Know that our hearts go out to you, and whatever efforts we are able to provide for assistance, we stand ready to do so. And a very heartfelt thank-you to those who are fighting these fires.

EPA RULE ON WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I came to the floor today to speak about an issue—a regulation that has raised a level of concern and controversy in my State of Alaska like no other we have seen in a long time, and this is in regard to the EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers and their release of a final version of a rule that significantly increases the ability of these agencies to regulate more of our land and our water. I am speaking specifically to the rule that expands the definition of "waters of the United States" under the Clean Water Act.

Coming from the State of Nebraska, an agriculture State, I am sure the Presiding Officer has heard concerns from constituents and farmers about the expansion of this definition and what it may mean to our economies.

The EPA claims this rule—and we lovingly refer to it as WOTUS—is a clarification to provide certainty and predictability as to where clean air permits are required. But the view of so many Alaskans—and really the view around the country—is that this rule is far beyond a simple clarification because it substantially increases EPA's regulatory reach. It will subject countless new projects to permitting requirements that will be difficult to satisfy, increasing cost and certainly increasing project delays.

The application of the WOTUS in Alaska is expansive and it is negative. It is something I have described as a showstopper in the past, and none of the changes in the final rule alter that